

Lara Lindsay Remembered

A Last Interview

SAMUEL CLEMENS

Lara Lindsay isn't a household name, but she certainly had the talent of some of the better actors seen on screen. She was born Gladys Irene Jacobs in Chicago, and began performing at the age of 6 when she did the waltz with Thomas Tubbs at Ogden Elementary School. Her passion was figure skating, and she did it competitively. In 1955, Lara placed second in the Midwest Figure Skating Championships, won various other competitions, and even taught skating on a part-time basis. She married Franz Lewis, and they had a son named Gregory Holden Lewis.

In the mid-1960s, she got the opportunity of a lifetime with a contract at 20th Century-Fox. Lara was given the traditional buildup that included interviews, modeling in furniture ads, odd titles like *Queen of the Riverside International Raceway*, and appearances at star-studded events including the premiere of *Tony Rome* (1967) at the Grauman's Chinese Theatre. She was also cast in decorative roles in TV series like *Premiere*, *Peyton Place*, *The Felony Squad*, and *Judd for the Defense*. She was a serious actress, though—and a good one, at that. She proved that with roles in *The Sweet Ride* (1968) and *The Boston Strangler* (1968), the latter with Tony Curtis.

Although she had been suffering from various illnesses, you'd never know it. Lara was still gorgeous, sharp, and active. She died on January 17, 2023, at the age of 84, weeks after we did our last interview. Her friend Jon Imperato said that she was dancing two days before her death. When I first tried to interview her, she was having dinner with several friends. You could even hear the sound of chatter in the background. That's a testament to the active life she had. I hope that readers will appreciate this marvelous woman after reading about her life.

Samuel Clemens: What inspired



Lara threatened by Tony Curtis in *The Boston Strangler*

you to pursue acting?

Lara Lindsay: My ambitions of being an ice skater were ruined when I suffered an injury that I won't go into. I married and had a son. We lived in Tucson, Arizona.

SC: How was the filming of *El Dorado* (1966)?

Lara Lindsay: Oh, my goodness. The director [Howard Hawks] wanted to cast me after seeing how good I was. That didn't happen. I later found out that Charlene [Holt] told him that it wasn't a good idea to have a stand-in in another role. I guess she didn't like me, or perhaps she felt threatened by my presence.

SC: Why did you use the name Lara Lindsay?

Lara Lindsay: I was supposed to use the name Laura Lindsay, but there was another Laura on contract with the studio. That's why they had me use the name Lara. My agent didn't think that Gladys Jacobs would look great on a marquee. The surname Lindsay I used because that was my brother's

name.

SC: Where did you study acting?

Lara Lindsay: After I was given a contract with 20th-Century-Fox on December 12, 1966, they placed me in a class taught by Pamela Danova and Curt Conway. They had me learn ballet with Ron Lerner. We learned a lot. I had some great classmates, too. Edy Williams, Richard Krisher, and Tony Scotti were among those in the class. They didn't cast me in anything for almost a year. They wanted me to be prepared.

SC: You were cast as Martha in *The Sweet Ride*. How did you get that role?

Lara Lindsay: When my contract with the studio was ending, they had me do an audition so they could decide whether I was worth keeping. One of their producers, Joe Pasternak, liked my performance, so he offered me the part.

SC: Anything interesting about *The Boston Strangler* with Tony Curtis?

Lara Lindsay: I get a lot of mail about that film. My character was murdered by Tony Curtis, so I don't get a lot of screen time. I was just thankful to be in the film because I fell and was in a cast days after we wrapped up the filming, so I would've been on the sidelines for a while. Tony was nice. He didn't seem interested in a newcomer like me, which I was fine with. We were great together.

SC: What's your assessment of 20th Century-Fox and their handling of their actors?

Lara Lindsay: They were fair. I was actually surprised. They didn't put me through exaggerated publicity. They didn't force me to date. They didn't ask me to do pinups. They were serious about their actors being good at their craft. I was told to do appearances at various premieres, but nothing extreme. I cannot stand it when studios use negative and often false publicity to further their actors' careers. It's unnecessary because audiences

want to see talent when they watch a film.

SC: After almost a decade off-screen, you were in *Logan's Run* (1976). How did that happen?

Lara Lindsay: Saul David asked me to do that film. We had been good friends for years. Apparently, one of the actresses left the production and they were already behind schedule. His words were "Can you do me this favor?" Honestly, I felt that he was doing me a favor.

SC: I read that you married someone named Howard Ladd. Is that the same Howard Ladd who pioneered the electronics industry? Was it a good marriage?

Lara Lindsay: He invented various recorders. He founded Concord Electronics. He was even inducted in the Consumer Electronics Industry Hall of Fame. It was a great marriage. We were together until his death [in 2015]. I can't say that his children cared for me, but stepmoms are typically seen as an enemy.

SC: What was the worst disappointment of your career?

Lara Lindsay: I was cast in *Hello, Dolly!* (1969). That would've propelled me to stardom. As rewrites and edits were made to the film, my part diminished. I was hardly in the film. I would've been more understanding had I been given an explanation.

SC: You are 84 years old, but you are still gorgeous. Do you have any secrets you want to share?

Lara Lindsay: You gotta have a good mindset. I always try to stay positive. I'm active, as well. I swim, jog, and dance. Of course, I still do skating. We're going to get older, but we don't have to get elderly.

SC: Why did you quit acting?

Lara Lindsay: I guess I was annoyed by the countless offers I was getting. That's a joke, of course. The industry changed a lot, and I wasn't getting scripts that appealed to me. If someone gave me a script that I thought was good, I would've pursued the role. I was a serious actress, and I wasn't willing to accept any role for a paycheck.



Lara Lindsay with Ed Winter in The Boston Strangler

